

FIFTY-FIFTH CONGRESS LINED UP FOR WORK

Tom Reed in the House and Hobart
in the Senate

WIELD THE SCEPTERS OF POWER

President's Message Commanded Attention
by Representatives and Senators.

'T WAS A VERY WEAK NUMBER

Say the Leading Members From Alabama, and the Retir-
ing of Greenbacks Will Not Be Accepted—Senator
Money Present But Not Sworn In—Gage's Re-
commendations For Alabama Rivers.

Special to The Age-Herald.

Washington, Dec. 6.—The gavel which the speaker called the house to order with was presented to him by J. C. Greenes, sheriff of Knox county Tennessee, who sent it the name of the "stall-wart republicans of East Tennessee." It was formally presented through H. C. Evans, the commissioner of pensions. The gavel is made of apple tree wood, which grew beside the house in which Farragut was born. This house stood at Lowe's Ferry on the Tennessee river, six miles below Knoxville.

Tom Reed let this gavel fall heavier than was his wont as if to warn the members of the house that he had not relaxed his grip since the last session.

The sound was ominous. Even Bailey and McMillin exchanged glances. Joe Cannon, the dancing dervish of Danville, gave a sudden start as the gavel fell, and Bonnet, of Brooklyn, the sportsman of the house, looked over at McClellan, of New York, and held up his hand as if to say "They're off."

Some of the Notable Visitors

Unusual interest marked the opening of the session. The people of the pavilion, as Taftland was wont to call them, had crowded the public galleries long before the hour of assembling. The reserved seats were filled with beauty and the wealth of Washington. In the speaker's pew was Mrs. Reed and her daughter, Kitty, with a number of young friends. There was also Mrs. Hitt, the wife of the chief of the committee on foreign affairs. Mrs. Hitt is easily distinguished wherever she appears. She is comparatively a young woman with hair as white as the driven snow. Immediately back of her sat Mrs. Bailey, the wife of the young and ambitious leader of the democratic minority. Other notable women were present. Mrs. John A. Logan, who never misses a public affair of any kind, occupied a prominent position in the speaker's gallery. Under her chaperonage was the little Cuban, Miss Cisneros, lately liberated from one of Weyler's dungeons. The frightened look had disappeared entirely from her face, and though understanding English but little, she took the greatest interest in the proceedings of the house.

The little Cuban has been placed in a convent here and there was something pathetic about her when she said this morning in broken English: "It is the greatest cross I have to bear, but 'Mr. Journal,' she always speaks of Mr. Hearst as Mr. Journal, 'says I must learn English and music, and whatever Mr. Journal says of course I will do.'"

Over in the executive gallery were to be seen a number of new faces. Mrs. Alger and Mrs. Gary were there, chaperoning the ten cabinet girls, none of whom had ever seen an opening of congress before. Almost immediately after the gavel fell, however, they left in order to avoid the crush in the corridors.

Down on the floor all was a crush and a commotion at a comparatively early hour. The members had become acquainted during the extra session, when many friendships were formed and attachments made even among members of the opposing parties. Among the three hundred and one members present there were only about twenty whose physiognomies were known to the galleries. It has been said that twenty men in congress make the laws of the country. Sometimes there are not that many. In fact, during the last session it might be said that one man alone was responsible for the laws that went on the statute books and that man was Tom Reed. But today, while the democrats eye the republicans with suspicion, and the republicans in turn size up the democrats as men about to make trouble; still the best of humor prevails among the members as views are exchanged.

Well Known Members

Among the first well known members to arrive was representative Hitt, chairman of the foreign affairs committee. He entered from the south door rubbing his palms together, as if washing his hands with invisible soap and imperceptible water, a quotation made famous by John J. Ingalls, in describing old Senator Joe Brown, of Georgia. Hitt

had all the appearance of Pilate while trying to cleanse himself from the charge of jingoism. One thing is certain, no Cuban resolution will ever be reported from his committee, until the president is ready to let loose the dogs of war.

As Gen. Grosvenor, the white-bearded statistician, entered the members began to applaud, and the galleries followed suit. In spite of the fact that Gen. Grosvenor is one of the most unpopular men personally in the house, his appearance is always the signal for noise. McMillin and Richardson entered almost simultaneously from different doors, and the friends of both these rival candidates gave them a hearty welcome. The tip is given out that McMillin no longer intends to oppose Richardson for the speakership in case the next house is democratic, but will leave the "tall wire-grass of the Cumberland" to compete alone with Bailey, of Texas, for future honors. McMillin, it is said, will enter for the senatorship or for the gubernatorial chair of the Volunteer state, which will unite the opposition against Bailey, should the next house be democratic.

Charles W. Stone, of Pennsylvania, the author of the immigration bill which passed the house once, but was vetoed by Grover Cleveland, was also given a hearty welcome, especially by those who are ready to follow him in another fight for restricting immigration to his country.

Possibly the sincerest welcome which was given was accorded Joe Bailey, of Texas. He was dressed as usual, a dress suit and a Prince Albert coat, a low collar, a black necktie, and a blousy pair of trousers. Bailey's friends are almost fanatic about him, and gather around him like a compact body of college boys, ready to do the elbow with the winning captain of a football team. Bailey's reception was only second to that extended to Richard P. Bland, of Missouri. Gen. Joe Wheeler, of Alabama, commonly called the "flying squirrel" of the house, owing to the manner in which he darts about from desk to desk in making a speech, came early. Bob Cousins, known as the Beau Brummell of the house, in spite of the fact that he comes from Iowa, caused somewhat of a sensation in the galleries. Albert S. Berry, of Kentucky, the "tall poplar of the Licking," measuring more inches than any man in either house of congress came in for his share of comment.

Representative Dingley, of Maine, author of the now famous or infamous Dingley bill, according to the different points of view, did not come until a few moments before the speaker, when he received a purely partisan welcome. "Private" John Allen, of Mississippi, the humorist of the house, the laughing philosopher and the sage of Tupelo, and a dozen other aliases, was one of the last arrivals. He looked as unkempt and untidy as ever, but these are characteristics which rather add to his notoriety than detract from it.

Jerry Simpson, no longer sockless but clothed in golf hose and bicycle trousers, came in unheralded by any applause. When asked what he intended doing this session, "That," if I can," he said, pointing to the speaker's chair. The long-haired and long-winded James Hamilton Lewis, the faultlessly attired poplite from Washington was in his seat when he gavel fell, bowing and smiling at imaginary friends and overlooking real ones, ready to make his points of order, and equally ready to be squelched. Dazell and Paine, the other majority members of the committee on rules, were not missing when the roll was called.

The Alabama Delegation

The Alabama members were all in their seats to answer to the roll call when the gavel fell.

Senator Morgan and Senator Pettus were over in the senate ready to annex Hawaii, Cuba or "any old thing" which might come up for annexation. Representatives Wheeler and Underwood were among the first to arrive on the floor. They took seats not far apart.

Underwood is always the object of much criticism on account of his personal appearance. He sits very near George McClellan; the two are not unlike either. McClellan is pointed out by the guides

as the handsomest man in the house and Underwood as the youngest. But from a distance the guides often mix them up and Underwood passes as the Adonis and McClellan as the kid, "though neither is neither," as I once heard a woman say.

Representatives Wheeler and Stallings came in at the same time and were soon followed by Representative Howard, whose appearance was another cause for explanations in the gallery.

Representative Bankhead, who is one of the best known members of the house, was warmly greeted by democrats and republicans alike when he entered the house.

A few minutes after the Alabama came in, Tom Reed ambled in along the corridors and just as the clock struck twelve, made his appearance on the floor. There was at once a burst of applause from the republican side, but on closer scrutiny it was seen that there was a goodly number of the republicans who did not join in the manifestation.

The czar will have more trouble holding his own side in check this session than he did last spring, but he will hold them, nevertheless. There is an incipient revolt forming, as there always is, at the opening of a session, but it will be found that what the speaker wants done will be done and what he does not want done will be left undone.

A. W. BUTT.

(By Associated Press)

Washington, Dec. 6.—The roll call showed the presence of 301 members. There were five vacancies from death or resignation during the recess, and the credentials of the members-elect were read by direction of the speaker, who then administered oaths of office to them.

They were: F. M. Griffiths, (dem.) successor to the late Judge Holman, in the Fourth Indian district; H. M. Boultelle, (rep.) of Chicago, who succeeded Edward D. Cook, deceased; James Norton, (dem.) of the Seventh South Carolina district, who succeeded John G. McLaurin, now a senator; George P. Lawrence, (rep.) of the First Massachusetts district, who succeeded Representative Wright, deceased; and John N. Griggs, (dem.) of the Third New York district, who succeeded Francis U. Wilson, who resigned to accept the position of postmaster at Brooklyn. The latter's credentials had not yet arrived, but the oath was administered to him by unanimous consent.

On motion of Mr. Hopkins, (rep.) of Illinois, the clerk was directed to notify the senate that the house was ready for business and on motion of Mr. Dingley, the floor leader, a resolution was adopted of three to join the committee of the senate to wait on the president, and inform him that congress was ready to receive any communication he desired to make. The speaker selected Messrs. Dingley, of Maine; Grosvenor, of Ohio, and Bailey, of Texas, for this honor.

On motion of Mr. Henderson, of Iowa, a member of the committee on rules, the rule at the extra session for three day adjournment was vacated and daily sessions to begin at noon each day were ordered. There being nothing to do but wait the reception of the president's message the house then recessed until 1:20. When the house reconvened another recess of twenty minutes was ordered. When the house reconvened at 1:40 the committee appointed to wait upon the president came down the center aisle and Mr. Dingley reported that the committee had performed its mission.

"The president," said he, "was pleased to send to the two houses his respectful salutations and to inform them that he would communicate in writing."

Mr. Pruden, who had followed the committee into the hall immediately presented the message of the president to the house, which, by the direction of Speaker Reed was read at the clerk's desk.

The message was listened to with great earnestness and especially the portions dealing with the question of revising the currency legislation and about the attitude towards Cuba. The president's utterances on both subjects seemed to impress the members deeply, but there was no demonstration of any kind until the conclusion when the republicans joined in a round of applause. The reading consumed an hour and twenty minutes.

On motion of Mr. Dingley, the message was referred to the committee of the whole and ordered printed.

Mr. Laurence, republican of Massachusetts, then officially announced the death of his predecessor, the late Representative Wright, and Mr. Allen, democrat, of Mississippi, the death of Senator George. Out of respect to their memories the house, then at 3:05 o'clock adjourned until tomorrow.

There were a large number of bills introduced in the house today. They included the following:

Mr. Henry (Tex.)—Bill to punish, trusts combinations, etc., to permit of free competition in the United States.

Evans (Ky.)—Reducing the internal revenue tax on distilled spirits to 75 cents per gallon.

ALABAMA REPRESENTATIVES

Note the Weakness of the Message—Their Views and Comments.

Special to The Age-Herald.

Washington, Dec. 6.—"It was the weakest message that had been sent to congress by a president since I have been in the house," said Representative Joe Wheeler, today.

This is the opinion expressed generally by democrats regarding the president's message of today. Of course it cannot be expected that democrats will endorse the main features of the document, but there is considerable disappointment even among the republicans. The latter take the president's evasion of the Cuban question with better grace than they do his recommendation to retire the greenbacks. A number of leading republicans express the opinion in fact that a bill embodying such a provision can never pass the house.

Continuing on the message, General Wheeler said further: "It is in no matter a strong, or even a moderately strong message. No decided opinions are expressed on any leading subject. Its advocacy of retiring the greenbacks will meet with great opposition, certainly on the democratic side, and I believe also

in the republican party. His views as to the rights of Cubans to be recognized under constitutional law are all wrong, and will not hold. The message is in short, a dead failure, as far as influencing the house is concerned."

Representative Underwood, after hearing and then reading the message of the president said: "He has managed to evade the Cuban question in a very adroit manner."

"So far as I can see, he gave nothing new regarding this perplexing matter, and certainly suggested nothing new."

"As far as his recommendations on the currency question goes, they simply boiled down, mean the retirement of the greenbacks."

"It is doubtful if such a bill as he suggests can be passed through the committee on banking and currency."

"I feel certain that it could not pass the house, as many republicans are bitterly opposed to this scheme."

Representative Bankhead said: "From a republican standpoint I do not suppose the message is a bad one, but I find little in it to commend myself."

"He says nothing about Cuba, which is worthy consideration of those who hope to see Cuba free, while his remarks about Mr. Walcott are amusing."

"I have no idea that a bill embodying his recommendations to retire the greenbacks can pass the house. It would certainly fall in the senate."

Representative Plowman said: "I don't see how anything in the way of legislation is going to be accomplished in the house either as regards the currency question, Cuba or any important matter unless the speaker declares that he wants something done. As far as the enactment of any currency legislation is concerned, I do not think that even the immense influence of Reed would be able to whip a majority in to line to take any action that would further tighten the grip of the banking interests on the people of this country. One thing seems certain tonight; the western republicans will not vote for any proposition that includes the retirement of the greenbacks and any scheme that meets with the approval of the gold men is certain to contain such a proposition."

SEVERE CRITICISMS

By Democratic and Republican Members of the Upper and Lower Branches of Congress.

Washington, Dec. 6.—Democratic senators were generally averse to expression of any opinion upon the message. Senator Roach was an exception to the rule in this connection. He called especial attention to the president's declaration that the government is pledged to maintain gold redemption.

"This," he said, "is a mere assumption. We have not a single obligation, which is not explicitly redeemable in coin, the word 'gold' being mentioned in none of them."

Senator White, (dem.) of California, said: "The message is elaborate; its conclusions are veiled. I cannot agree with his Hawaiian notions and that he has failed to inform us what we ought to do concerning Secretary Sage's great currency reform plan."

Senator Allison: "I do not take the despairing view concerning our currency which the president presents."

Senator Hoar: "It struck me as a wise, compact and carefully considered document. I do not agree with the president's conclusions on the subject of international law as regards Cuba. His recommendations on the currency question appear expressive."

Senator Hanna: "It is a statesmanlike and American paper."

Senator Burrows: "It is a clear, concise and comprehensive measure."

Senator Allen (pop.): "I fail to agree with him on his three principal subjects."

Senator Teller (silver rep.): "I do not regard any legislation will be enacted authorizing the retaining of the greenbacks in the treasury until someone is ready to pay gold for them."

Senator Pettigrew (silver rep.): "The president proposes to retire the greenbacks, and in doing so he tries to disguise the method by which it is to be accomplished."

Representative Sayres (dem.), of Texas: "If regard the proposed policy towards Cuba as fatal on the part of this government."

Representative Bland (dem.), of Missouri: "The message on the whole sounds apologetic and like an affidavit for a continuance."

Representative Clark (dem.), of Missouri: "The message will be a great campaign document for the democrats. If the recommendations advocated therein are adopted by the republicans we ought to win in 1898 and 1900 hands down."

Representative Cox (dem.), of Tennessee, the ranking democratic member on the committee of banking and currency: "The message on the subject of the currency is in my opinion an utter failure."

Mr. Cannon, chairman of the committee on appropriations, said: "I am much gratified with that feature of the president's message in which he says: 'It is a commanding duty to keep the appropriations within the revenue of the government and thus avoid a deficiency.' The suggestion is particularly timely just now."

Chairman Dingley, of Maine, said: "The message is a great state paper which will be generally applauded."

Chairman Hitt, of Illinois, of the committee on foreign affairs: "The message shows that the president has promptly acted upon the Cuban question on the lines he had recommended as a policy toward the Cubans."

Representative Walker, republican, of Massachusetts, chairman of the committee on banking and currency, said as to the financial features of the message: "I fear the message is not sufficiently specific and does not go far enough to relieve the situation. It does not recommend that anything shall be done until the revenues exceed the expenditures of the government which may be many months in the future and is far from immediate action. Second, that the greenbacks shall not be paid out except for gold when once redeemed in gold, if enacted into law would result in a man with \$1-

(Continued on Fourth Page.)

THE PRESIDENT'S FIRST REAL MESSAGE

A Lengthy Document But Not Regarded
as One of Great Strength.

ADVISES RETIRING GREENBACKS

Handles Cuban Matters Glibly and Opposes Recognition of Urgents.

HE WANTS HAWAII ANNEXED

Throws Bouquets at the Late Monetary Commission and Asks For Better Government in Alaska—Down on the Trusts in Indian Nation, and Winds Up With Hedging on Civil Service Reform.

Washington, Dec. 6.—President McKinley sent to congress today the following message:

To the Senate and House of Representatives:

It gives me much pleasure to extend greeting to the Fifty-fifth congress assembled in regular session at the seat of government with many of whose senators and representatives I have been associated with in the legislative service. Their meeting occurs under felicitous conditions justifying sincere congratulation and calling for our grateful acknowledgement to a beneficent Providence, which has so signally blessed and prospered us as a nation. Peace and good will with all the nations of the earth continue unbroken. A matter of great satisfaction is the growing feeling of fraternal regard and unification of all sections of our country, the incompleteness of which has too long delayed realization of the highest blessing of the union. The spirit of patriotism is universal and is increasing in fervor. The public questions, which now most engross us are lifted far above either partisanship, prejudice or former sectional differences. They affect every part of our common country alike and permit of no division on ancient lines. Questions of foreign policy, of revenue, the soundness of the currency, the inviolability of national obligations, the improvement of the public revenue, appeal to the individual conscience of every earnest citizen to whatever party he belongs or in whatever section of the country he may reside.

The extra session of this congress which closed during July last, enacted important legislation and while its full effect has not yet been realized, what it has already accomplished assures us of its timeliness and wisdom. To test its permanent value further time will be required and the people, satisfied with its operation and results thus far, are in no mind to withhold from it a fair trial.

Tariff legislation having been settled by the extra session of congress, the question next pressing for consideration is that of the currency.

The Financial Question.

The work of putting our finances upon a sound basis, difficult as it may seem, will appear easier when we recall the financial operations of our government since 1866. On the 13th day of June of that year we had outstanding demand liabilities in the sum of \$728,868,447.41. On the first of January, 1879 these liabilities had been reduced to \$443,889,495.88. Of our liabilities bearing obligations the figures are even more striking. On July 1, 1866, the principal of the interest bearing debt of the government was \$2,332,331,208. On the first day of July, 1893, this sum had been reduced to \$585,037,100, or an aggregate reduction of \$1,747,294,108. The interest bearing debt of the United States on the first day of July, 1897 was \$347,365,620. The government money now outstanding (December) consists of \$346,681,016 of United States notes; \$1,793,280 of treasury notes issued by authority of the law of 1890, \$384,963,504 of silver certificates and \$61,280,761 of standard silver dollars.

With the great resources of the government and with honorable examples of the past before us, we ought not to hesitate to enter upon a currency revision which will make our demand obligations less onerous to the government and relieve our financial laws from ambiguity and doubt.

The brief review of what was accomplished from the close of the war to 1893 makes unreasonable and groundless any distrust either of our financial ability or soundness; while the situation from 1893 to 1897 must admonish congress of the immediate necessity of so legislating as to make the return of the conditions then prevailing impossible. There are many propositions as a remedy for this evil. It is not that our currency of every kind is not good, for every dollar of it is good, good because the government's pledge is ours to keep it so and that pledge will not be broken. However, the guaranty of our power to keep the pledge will be best shown by advancing towards its fulfillment.

The evil of the present system is found in the great cost to the government of maintaining the parity of our different forms of money, that is keeping all of them at a par with gold. We surely cannot be longer heedless of the burden this imposes upon the people, even under fairly prosperous conditions, while the past four years have demonstrated that it is not only an expensive charge upon the government, but a dangerous menace to the national credit.

It is manifest that we must devise some plan to protect the government against bond issues, for repeated redemptions. We must curtail the opportunity for speculation, made easy by the multiple redemptions of our demand obligations or increase the gold reserve for their redemption. We have \$900,000,000 of currency, which the government by solemn enactment has undertaken to keep at par with gold. Nobody is obliged to redeem in gold but the government is obliged to keep equal with gold all its outstanding currency and coin outstanding, while its receipts are not required to be paid in gold. They are paid in every kind of money but gold and the only means by which the government can with certainty get gold is by borrowing. It can get it in no other way when it most needs it. The government without fixed gold reserve is pledged to maintain gold redemption which it has steadily and faithfully done and which under the authority now given it will continue to do. The law which requires the government, after having redeemed its United States notes to pay them out again as current funds, demands a constant replenishment of the gold reserve. This is especially so in times of business panic and when the revenue is insufficient to meet the expenses of the government. At such times the government has no other way to supply its deficit and maintain redemption, but through the increase of its bonded debt as during the administration of my predecessor, when \$262,315,400 of four and a half per cent. bonds were issued and sold and the proceeds used to pay the expenses of the government in excess of the revenues and sustain the gold reserve. While it is true that the greater part of the proceeds of these bonds were sold to supply deficient revenues a considerable portion was required to maintain the gold reserve.

With our revenues equal to our expenses there would be no deficit requiring the issuance of bonds. But if the gold reserve falls below \$100,000,000, how will it be replenished except by selling more bonds? Is there any other way practicable under existing law? The serious question then is: "Shall we continue the system that has been pursued in the past, that is when the gold reserve reaches the danger line, issue more bonds to supply the needed gold or shall we provide other means to prevent these recurring drains upon the gold reserve? If no further legislation is had and the policy of selling bonds is to be continued, then congress should give the secretary of the treasury authority to sell bonds at long or short periods, bearing a less rate of interest than is now authorized by law. I earnestly recommend as soon as the accounts of the government are quite sufficient to pay all expenses of the government that when any United States notes are presented for redemption, or are redeemed, in gold such notes shall be set apart and only paid out in exchange for gold. This is